5th Anniversary of Crawley Walking Festival

Loose Leaf summer 2010 newsletter

Gatwick Greenspace Partnership

Pull out sections for Volunteer Tasks and Crawley Health Walks.
ast time I wrote this, I mentioned snow, and now it is half way through the year! We have our usual programme of volunteer activities, guided walks and bushcraft going on, but it is difficult for the newsletter to really reflect everything we do.

So as a snapshot of just one day, while I write this, this is what else is going on:

We have our regular volunteer group installing some new steps and removing some rhododendron. They are joined by a small group of corporate volunteers, having a day out from their usual business, and two teenagers from a local school who are undertaking some work experience.

Our Green Health group, are trying their hand at wood carving, with the help of an experienced woodsman who we have brought in for the day. Just having a go at something new is a positive experience, enhanced when they can take away something they have made.

Our Forest schools co-ordinator is working with a group of pupils excluded from mainstream school and I have also got to do some work towards a Green Infrastructure seminar. There is no such thing as a quiet day for Gatwick Greenspace!

But none of it is possible without YOUR involvement. We are always looking for more volunteers, for practical work, to lead walks, or becoming involved with our educational work. It is also the 5th anniversary of the Crawley Walking Festival, which was a spin off from the Crawley Health Walks scheme. To mark the occasion and to say thank you to the many people who are and have been involved with our work we are hosting a celebration – see inside for more details.

Barry and a friend will be doing a sponsored climb the week beginning 23rd August to raise funds for Crawley opportunity playgroup/pre-school. This is a very small local charity doing amazing, often life changing work, benefiting children with special needs and their families. Funds raised will go towards buying Small World Toys. Please contact Barry if you would like to sponsor him.

Finally, as promised in the last edition, we have a picture of Barry with his 4 month old daughter, Abby.

Regards,
Pete
Early March saw Pete and I working with a large corporate group from Virgin Holidays in Tilgate Park. The weather was kind to us, so we had a large fire raging and we managed to clear a large area of Rhododendron that had been cut and piled up previously. March also saw us returning to some familiar sites; Edolph’s Copse (glade creation), Chart Park, Dorking (Laurel clearing), Owlbeech Woods, Horsham (Birch and Holly removal) and Buchan Country Park (Deer fence installation).

April was exceptionally warm this year and bereft of the usual showers that are traditional at this time of year. However, many of the early flowering plants, especially the Snowdrops and Daffodils, were still recovering from the harsh winter and as a result, were appearing about three weeks later than they normally would. Joining us at Owlbeech Woods to assault the Rhododendron, was a group from Outset Youth Action, led by Jan English and Anne Taylor. Hopefully, they all enjoyed the work and I look forward to working with them again in the near future. Other tasks in April were at Chart Park, Buchan Country Park and a Bluebell walk with Pete in Glover’s Wood (again, the display was late this year due to a longer Winter).

After a week off in Devon, I came back in May to lead the first of two sessions this month at Tilgate Forest, removing the taller Birch and Willow re-growth from under the power lines.

The access track had been heavily rutted by contractors this Winter, but now that the ruts have dried out, it made for an interesting drive down to our work area! This stretch of Heathland is looking much better now and should provide a good habitat for Adders, Slow-worms and Common Lizards, as well as many other Heathland species, although the Birch will need to be pushed back along the edge of the Ride again before too long. We also returned to Buchan Country Park to work with their Thursday volunteer group, reinstating the Deer fencing, although having a large group like this can be tricky...especially at the height of the nesting season!

Finally for now, I would like to open up Loose Leaf to you...Do you have a story to tell, a passion to share or a photo that you would like to donate to us? If so, please contact me at the usual address or email me at kevinlerwill@sussexwt.org.uk and I will try to include you in a future issue...Many thanks for now.
Alan Gilham 1950-2010
Champion of biodiversity

Alan was a great friend to GGP, and to staff and volunteers past and present. We knew him best as was the task leader and volunteer warden for the Woodland Trust sites around Charlwood, where the project has worked since its start. He was also Volunteer Reserve Manager for Old Lodge nature reserve (a Sussex Wildlife Trust site in the Ashdown Forest). A couple of our volunteers have written their own tributes, which sum him up better than I could have done, so thanks to Ines and Chris.

Alan was passionate about biodiversity. He also had the uncommon gift of being able and willing to explain to others in simple terms the complexities of different environments and habitats. For example when I first started conserving I was baffled that sometimes we uprooted and cut down birch, pine and sometimes sycamore, and at other times we left and protected mature pine and birch, depending on the habitat. Sycamore and birch trees were very plentiful in Glover’s wood, and Hammonds Copse was overrun with pines which we were trying to get rid of, but in Old Lodge solitary pines were valued as a perch for birds.

Outstanding qualities of Alan were his management and planning skills, his attention to detail and his great kindness. Alan was a true friend to our family. When my daughter had to write a management plan as part of her undergraduate studies he had time for her. I must say that in the fourteen years or more that we knew Alan we never heard him say an unkind word about anyone. His care and concern for his volunteers was exemplary. On very hot days he would bring ice-creams for us in a cool bag. On very cold days he would bring potatoes to bake in the fires and butter and grated cheese. He always made tasks as enjoyable as possible. We will really miss him.’

Alan was a good voluntary manager at Old lodge, always eager to please the staff at Woods Mill with whom he liaised and those who volunteered on the reserve with him. He would have two or more tasks planned for winter days so that if need be we could work in a sheltered spot away from the cold wind. He was an organiser down to the last detail- except for underestimating how long a task would take. If he said “This shouldn’t take more than two hours” you could guarantee it would take all day.

He had a healthy disrespect towards those in power at the top, the police, the military, politicians-especially politicians, the monarchy. How, or if, he voted nobody knew. He could not, however, have been an anarchist, he would have failed at the first hurdle- he was just too well organised!

Sitting in the passenger seat when he was driving was a pleasure. He drove with such consideration for others and never exceeded the speed limit. He lived his whole life with consideration for others and the flora and fauna of our countryside.

We should all be grateful he became a successful conservationist and not a failed anarchist.
Walking is a great form of exercise, regardless of how fit or how old you are. Health Walks are led by trained staff or volunteers. Walking as part of a group takes away any fear of getting lost and is very sociable – we walk and talk!

This easy, gentle and safe exercise can help reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, strokes, diabetes, high blood pressure, bowel cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, osteoporosis, arthritis and stress.

The health walks are graded:

**Level 1**
Suitable for the very unfit, those recovering from illness, accident or operation and walkers with limited stamina. No stiles on these walks.

**Level 2**
Some uneven ground and inclines on the route. Usually walk for about an hour, covering 2-3 miles.

**Level 3**
Could involve steep inclines, stiles & rutted terrain. Walking for at least an hour and a minimum of 3 miles.

For all walks: a sensible pair of trainers or shoes (preferably lace-ups) are advisable. The level 2 and 3 walks will be wet and muddy and you may find a pair of walking boots useful, especially in winter.

Please contact Barry on 01293 550730 / barrywildish@sussexwt.org.uk with any queries.
**Broadfield Stream**  
10.00am Wednesdays. Meet at the recycling Centre car-park, Broadfield Barton shops, with tea in the community centre after. Buses 1, 10, & 20.  
**Cherry Lane, Langley Green**  
10.45am Wednesdays at Cherry Lane Recreation Field, Langley Green. The 4 & 5 buses run along the nearby Martyrs Avenue.  
**Goffs Park**  
10.30am Tuesdays at Goffs Park, Horsham Road. Join Jayne at the free car-park by the level crossing. Buses 23 & 24 buses stop close by.  

**Ladies only walk – Tilgate Park**  
10.00am Thursdays. Ladies, meet Rubina at the main entrance to the K2 leisure centre, for a walk in the beautiful Tilgate Park. No. 2 bus.  

**Buggy walks**  
11.15am every Friday. 45 minute walk with your baby and buggy. Meet at the main entrance of K2 leisure centre Crawley. Fantastic opportunity to meet other new parents. Dads & grandparents welcome! Bring a picnic day -13th August – for a chance to have lunch in the park after the walk. No. 2 bus runs to K2.

## Level 2 Walks – All, start at 9-30

The Langley Green walk is on **every Wednesday**. For directions see above. The Tuesday walk alternates between Buchan Country Park and Tilgate Park. For Buchan Park, off Horsham Road, meet at the Countryside Centre. Nearest buses 1, 10, 23, 24, 200.  

**** Tilgate Park meeting point has changed due to works to lake/dam. Please meet at the carpark on Gainsborough Road, off Titmus Drive**** Nearest bus 2, 3, 73.

### July
- Tues 6th – Tilgate Park
- Tues 13th – Buchan Park
- Tues 20th – Tilgate Park
- Tues 27th – Buchan Park

### August
- Tues 3rd – Tilgate Park
- Tues 10th – Buchan Park
- Tues 17th – Tilgate Park
- Tues 24th – Buchan Park
- Tues 31st – Tilgate Park

### September
- Tues 7th – Buchan Park
- Tues 14th – Tilgate Park
- Tues 21st – Buchan Park
- Tues 28th – Tilgate Park

### October
- Tues 5th – Buchan Park
- Tues 12th – Tilgate Park
- Tues 19th – Buchan Park
- Tues 26th – Tilgate Park

[cont. on p14]
Volunteer Task Programme

THE VEHICLE LEAVES TILGATE PARK FOR SITE AT 9.30AM. PLEASE RING THE DAY BEFORE IF YOU WANT A LIFT, OR MEET ON SITE FROM 10.00 AM ONWARDS. ON THE DAY PLEASE RING 07788 101544 OR 0777 5907492.

July


Wed 14th- Crawter’s Brook, Manor Royal – scrub clearing and Himalayan Balsam pulling. Meet at entrance to site by Gatwick Road roundabout, Manor Royal TQ282 384

Thurs 22nd – Hammonds Copse – Pine felling. Meet at bridleway entrance off Broad Lane near Newdigate TQ 209 442

Sun 25th – St Leonard’s Forest – heathland maintenance. Meet at the ranger’s lodge on the bridleway south of Forest Road, Colgate TQ221 324

Wed 28th – Betchworth Park – Himalayan Balsam pulling - Meet at the first left off Punchbowl Lane opposite Ladyegate Road, Dorking TQ177 496
August


Wed 11th – Chart Park – thinning and habitat piles. Meet at car park on Chart Lane South, (off the A24) near junction with Chart Downs TQ 175 482

Thurs 19th – Hammonds Copse – Pine felling. Meet at bridleway entrance off Broad Lane near Newdigate TQ 209 442

Sun 22nd – St Leonards Forest – heathland maintenance. Meet at the ranger’s lodge on the bridleway south of Forest Road, Colgate TQ221 324

Wed 25th – St Leonards Forest – Rhododendron removal. Location to be confirmed check with Kevin or see website.

September

Thurs 2nd – Owlbeech Woods – Thinning wet woodland. Meet at the car park by the playground at the end of Owlbeech Way, off South Holmes Road, Horsham TQ197 316

Wed 8th – Target Hill – Pond work and rhodie removal. Meet at the end of Hobbs Road, Broadfield, Crawley, TQ250 347

Thurs 16th – Edolph’s Copse – Pond dredging. Meet at the main entrance off Stan Hill Road, Charlwood TQ 234 422

Wed 22nd – Buchan Country Park – Pine removal. Meet at Buchan Park car park, off the Horsham Road, between Crawley and Horsham TQ 246 347

Sun 26th – St Leonard’s Forest – heathland maintenance. Meet at the ranger’s lodge on the bridleway south of Forest Road, Colgate TQ221 324
Thurs 30th – Waterlea Fields – pond and scrub clearance. Meet at the end of Water Lea, off Weald Drive, Crawley TQ 286 362

October
Wed 6th – St Leonard’s Forest – Rhododendron removal. Location to be confirmed - check with Kevin or see website.

Thurs 14th – Buchan Country Park – Heathland management. Meet at Buchan Park car park, off the Horsham Road, between Crawley and Horsham TQ 246 347

Wed 20th – Warnham LNR – woodland thinning. Meet at Warnham Nature Reserve car park, Horsham, off the A24 TQ 169 326

Sun 24th – St Leonard’s Forest – heathland maintenance. Meet at the ranger’s lodge on the bridleway south of Forest Road, Colgate TQ221 324

Thurs 28th Glover’s Woods – glade creation. Meet at the end of Golvers Road, off Russ Hill Road, Charlwood TQ 237 410
New to us?

Tasks start at 10am and usually end around 4.00pm, but some of our volunteers come out for just the morning.

You need to wear clothes suitable for the weather, and sturdy footwear.

Drinks and biscuits are provided but do bring a packed lunch if you plan to stay out all day.

We provide all tools and safety equipment and show you how to use all tools safely.

An adult must accompany children under 16 and you are advised to be up to date with your tetanus immunisation. A first aider will be available.

It is possible to arrange a lift from the office in Tilgate Park, Crawley, but please ring the office the day before task to confirm.
July

Fri 2nd – Ifield Incentive (5 miles) Meet behind the Plough Inn, The Street, Ifield

Wed 14th – Ardingly Evening (5 miles) 18.00 Meet at The Oak pub, Street Lane, Ardingly. Booking essential by Fri. 9th July – please phone 01293 550730

Fri 16th – St Leonards Saunter (5 miles) Meet at Buchan Country Park

Tuesday 20th – Burstow Stream stroll - (4.5 miles) Meet at the carpark by the playground at Oakside Court, off Broadmead, from Wheatfield Way, Landshott, Horley. Taking in the stream and woodland north of Horley

Sun 25th – The Millers Trail – (3 miles) 2-00pm. A walk along the Ifield Stream & a visit to see inside Ifield Mill. Meet at the Mill House pub on Hyde Drive. If you want to meet for lunch, please arrive at 12-45pm – booking essential on 01293 550730

Fri 30th – Staplefield Stagger (5 miles) Meet at lay-by on west side of village green, opposite Jolly Tanners pub, B2114, Staplefield

August

Wed 4th – Ouse Valley outing (4.5 miles) Walking with a sketchbook. Meet at Maidenbower recreation field car-park 9-30am or Ardingly reservoir carpark 10-00am (£1.00 to park) and bring a picnic/sketchbook/pens/pencils etc. Additional walking for those not sketching. Pre booking essential on 01293 550730

Fri 13th – Faygate Foray (5 miles) Meet at the Holmbush pub, Faygate Lane. Please stop for a drink/snack afterwards.

Fri 27th – Rusper Ramble (5 miles) Meet at the carpark in the High Street by the church and the Plough pub

Mon 30th – Handcross Circular (4.5 miles) Meet at Red Lion pub, High Street Handcross.

Crawley Walking Festival
2005-10 4th – 19th September

Booking essential on all walks – please phone 01293 550730

September

Saturday 4th – Old Crawley (6 miles) 9.30am. Ancient woodland, meadows and a water mill, without leaving Crawley! Meet at Goffs park carpark, by the level crossing on Horsham Road. Lunch at the Goffs Manor pub afterwards.

Sunday 5th – Gatwick Woods (4 miles) 10.00am A walk around this lovely site, and then stop for a bite to eat. Meet Parsons Pig pub, Balcombe Road.

Tues 7th – Buchan Park circular (2.5 miles) 9.30am – Meet at the visitor centre, Buchan Park for our regular level 2 walk – about 1 hour.

Wed 8th – Pound the Parks (3.5 miles) 2.00pm. A circuit taking in Grattons, Worth and Crabbet Parks. Meet at Grattons car-park, St Mary’s Drive, by the railway bridge.

Thurs 9th – Worth Abbey (9 miles) 10.00 From Tilgate golf course car park, Tilgate Park. Cross Worth Forest to reach the Abbey grounds. Bring a packed lunch.

Fri 10th – Slaugham Stroll (5 miles) 10.00am Meet at Slaugham Church in the centre of village. Please park sensibly.

Sat 11th – Willoughby Wander 10-00am (4 miles) Meet Crawley Rugby Club, Ifield Avenue. A lovely circuit through some beautiful meadows.

These two walks can be combined for a great day’s walking, with a pub lunch

Sat 11th – Ifield Circular 2pm (4 miles) Meet at the carpark behind the Plough public, Ifield. A walk through the rural landscape west of Crawley.
**September continued**

- **Sun 12th** – Beyond Bewbush (8 miles) 10.00am Meet at Buchan Country Park. Through farmland and woods for a pub lunch at Lambs Green, and back.

- **Tues 14th** – Tilgate (2.5 miles) – (9-30am) Meet at the carpark on Gainsborough Road, off Titmus Drive, Tilgate for our regular Level 2 walk.

- **Wed 15th** – Worth Way (7 miles) 9-00am Meet at bus stop D, opposite Crawley train station, to catch the 9-15am no.84 bus and walk back to Crawley from East Grinstead, stopping for a pub lunch along the Way. (Make sure you have some money for the bus ticket!)

- **Friday 17th** – North of Gatwick – (4 miles) 10.00am start. Park on Povey Cross road, Horley, heading away from Longbridge roundabout and meet at cross roads by van hire centre. A surprisingly rural walk taking a section of the River Mole.

- **Sat 19th** – Tilgate Trail (5 miles) 2.00pm Meet at K2 leisure centre main entrance. Explore the outer bounds of the Park and Forest.

- **Sat 19th** – 6pm – Celebration event to mark the close of the walking festival and the work of the project for over 15 years – see back page.

- **Thurs 23rd** – Staplefield to Nymans (4.5 miles) Meet at lay-by on west side of village green, opposite Jolly Tanners pub, B2114, Staplefield.

- **Fri 24th** – Rusper Roamer (5 miles) Meet at the carpark in the High Street by the church and the Plough pub.

**October**

- **Thurs 7th** – Tilgate Trail (4miles) 10.00am. From Gainsborough Road carpark, off Titmus Drive, Tilgate. A walk around Crawley’s largest park.

- **Fri 8th** – Ifield Impetus (5 miles) Meet behind the Plough Inn, Ifield.

- **Sat 9th** – East of Horley – (6 miles) 10.00am start. Meet at Riverside Garden Park carpark off the Crescent, Horley. A walk on ancient paths through farmland, past meadows and woods. Booking essential on 01293 550730.

- **Fri 22nd** – Faygate Foray (5 miles). Meet at the Holmbush pub. Please stop for a drink/snack afterwards.

- **Thurs 28th** – Copthorne Common (5 miles) Meet Copthorne Common Road, side road off Newtown Road.

For more information please contact Barry on 01293 550730 or email barrywildish@sussexwt.org.uk  
Crawley Green Health Project is sponsored by: (see below)
There has been a lot of news about the decline of honeybees. Less has been made of the similar losses of bumblebee numbers, but they are also important pollinators of agricultural crops, such as beans and soft fruits as well as wild flowers. We are all familiar with bumble bees but did you know there are actually 24 species of bumblebee? Although six remain relatively common, the number of species found in most of lowland Britain has halved since 1950. As usual this is due to the loss of habitat through agricultural “improvement”, pesticide use and the loss of gardens and changes in gardening fashion.

Bumblebee nests can be large, containing up to 400 workers, that will travel up to 1 km from the colony in search of suitable flowers. So each nest needs many hectares of suitable flower-rich habitat, meaning that to support a healthy population large areas of land must be managed sympathetically. Although invaluable, nature reserves are simply too small in isolation. It is essential that the wider farmed countryside and the vast areas covered by gardens are managed in a sensitive way.

So what can you do in your garden?

Bumblebees feed on nectar and pollen, so need a continual supply of flowers from March to October. They also need the right sort of flowers, as many modern cultivars and exotic blooms are unsuitable as they produce little nectar or pollen or keep it hidden behind frilly double blooms.

Particularly important are the early spring flowers which feed the queen bumblebees, coming out of hibernation. Flowering currant, lungwort (pulmonaria) and rosemary and the winter flowering heathers such as Erica carnea can all be vital sources of food. Through the summer traditional cottage garden flowers are the best, such as catmint, columbines, foxgloves, honeysuckle, lavender, lupins and purple flowered salvias. There are many other plants good for bees - a good tip is to look at what plants the bees are visiting in other gardens or in the garden centre.

If you are interested in learning more about gardening for wildlife, either in your own garden, a school ground or other public space, the Wildlife Trust do run courses and we can run one in Crawley if there is enough interest – please contact us.
Snakes

Of the three species of snakes that live in the UK, only two are found in our area: the Grass Snake and the Adder. (The third, the Smooth Snake, is the rarest and found only on heathland, but unfortunately, no longer around here.)

The Grass Snake is our largest reptile, with the larger females reaching 130cm/4 ft. They can live for up to 25 years, although each winter is spent hibernating in a frost free place, perhaps in deep leaf litter or under a rock pile. Despite their name they are essentially an aquatic species, whose habitat should be thought of as ponds, or ditches, and the land adjacent to them, which may be grassland, woods, parks or gardens. Grass snakes eat frogs, toads and newts, but they will also take fish and rodents. They are not poisonous, but tend to ambush their prey and swallow it whole.

Up to 40 leathery matt-white eggs are laid in June and July, often in compost heaps as the warmth acts as a natural incubator. The eggs measure from 23-30mm and hatch in early autumn.

As can be seen from the photo, grass snakes have a distinctive yellow and black collar. Compare this to the striking zig zag markings of the adder, which we are sometimes lucky to see on heathland tasks.

Adders are also found in woodland, especially around sunny glades. They are smaller, but heavier set than the slender Grass Snakes, with the females reaching 75cm/2½ ft. Like their cousins, adders hibernate, but usually do so communally, with a preferred “hibernaculum” containing many different snakes. Adders use the same hibernaculum for life, and for successive generations, making their protection important to the adders’ survival. Adders do not lay eggs, but bear live young, minatures of their parents, every second year.

Adders’ favourite prey are mice, voles and even rats, which they may ambush or actively hunt. The adder strikes its victim, injecting a lethal dose of its venom and then releases it. Thus the adder avoids the risk of injury from its struggling victim. The adder will then track its prey, by ‘tasting’ its trail in the air, using its tongue. Although there are around 100 cases of adders biting humans each year, these are done in self defence, usually when someone has stood on a adder or remarkably, half of all cases occur when someone has tried to pick one up! But fortunately no-one has died for over 30 years.

Sadly adders are still persecuted and both adders and grass snakes are in decline, due to habitat loss and disturbance. However it is illegal, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act to harm any snake.
Events

Holiday activities
Current holiday bushcraft activity days are run around Crawley and Horsham area at Tilgate Park, Buchan Country Park, Leechpool and Owlbeech woods.

Bushcraft for Children (8-14yrs)
- times are 10.00 – 15.00 or 16.00
- prices are always £15pp with light refreshments included
- April dates: 7th, 13th, 14th, 15th
- June 1st, 2nd, 3rd
- August 10th, 11th, 13th, 17th, 18th, 20th, 23rd

Bushcraft for Families (6+ yrs accompanied by parents unless overnight)
- Times are 10.00 – 14.00
- Prices are always £7.50pp with light refreshments included.
- April 6th / August 12th, 24th

If you would like to book a bushcraft day or know a school or community group that would interested in developing a Forest Schools programme, please contact Tom on tomforward@sussexwt.org.uk, or 01293 550730

Celebration
To celebrate our 5th anniversary of the Crawley Walking Festival, and over 15 years of the project’s work we are holding an event on Sat 18th September at 6-00pm at the office, by the walled garden in Tilgate Park. This will include a hog roast, salad and soft drinks, some displays of our work and walks over the years, and hopefully lots of YOU. If you are one of our past or present regular walkers, or volunteers, or have been in the past, then we will be delighted to see you. Well behaved partners and children welcome! We will be asking for a donation of £2.50 per person towards the food.

Please park in the main car-park (it should be free after 6-00pm) and follow the direction arrows.
But to organise this event, we do need to know whether you are coming.

Can you please fill this slip and return it to us, or email us the information by 15th August

Name

Contact no. / email

Number of places required

Vegetarian option required
For more information contact Pete & Kevin:

Gatwick Greenspace Partnership, Tilgate Park, Crawley, RH10 5PQ

tel: 01293 550730 or 0777 590 7492
web: www.sussexwt.org.uk/community/page00001.htm
blog: http://gatwickgreenspace.blogspot.com
email: petecrawford@sussexwt.org.uk

The Gatwick Greenspace Partnership is managed by Sussex Wildlife Trust and supported by Surrey County Council, West Sussex County Council, Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, Horley Town Council & BAA Gatwick